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UNCLAS CHIANG MAI 000215

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JAPANESE CONSULATE GENERAL EXPANDING PRESENCE IN NORTHERN THAILAND

REF: A) CHIANG MAI 214, B) CHIANG MAI 195, C) CHIANG MAI 72, D) 2004 CHIANG MAI 278

1. Summary. Japanese diplomatic representation in Chiang Mai continues to expand with the addition of a fluent Thai speaker, the first to be stationed in the north in many years. The Consul General has n
2. With the arrival of Thai specialist Horikoshi Hisao, the Japanese Consulate General in Chiang Mai now has seven officers on the diplomatic
3. Newly arrived officer Horikoshi Hisao paid an introductory call to the U.S. Consul General and ConOff September 16, accompanied by Consul I issues. The two were eager to hear U.S. perceptions of the threat level in northern Thailand, whether we had increased security as a result of the Haad Yai airport bombing in April, and how we handle se
4. Hisao described the Consulate's 2004 upgrade as based on three main factors: (1) the growing number of "long-stay" Japanese citizens in northern Thailand, (2) specific requests from Japanese businesses in nearby Lamphun province, and (3) interest in Burma bc
5. While not expressed openly, the increased Japanese role is likely also aimed at balancing growing Chinese influence in northern Thailand (r
6. The Japanese Consulate has already gained visibility with a number of activities, including a grant of \$80,000 for anti-trafficking work ir
7. Hisao, a career Thai specialist, has spent almost his entire career in Bangkok or the Foreign Ministry's Thailand desk. He also studied for
8. This is not the first time that the collegial Japanese Consul General Katsuro Shinohara has sent staff to consult with us. He himself has c
9. Comment: The addition of a Thai-speaking officer with interests similar to ours opens up possibilities for joint collaboration. In particular, our shared concern about trafficking in persons, particularly in Phayao province, could lead to productive future cooperation on programs and approaches to this issue.

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